

Virtual Schools in Virginia

House Appropriations Committee
June 20, 2011

The Honorable Christopher B. Saxman

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happy
Successful Students



Agenda

- Involvement, choice and control that Virginia schools have with online courses
- Advantages for both school divisions and students
- Quality of the courses that are available and how they align with the SOLs
- Participation of local teachers / staff
- Financial costs of online instruction



Involvement, Choice, & Control with Online Courses

- Access to considerable breadth and depth of proven, cost-effective courses
- Highly scalable
- Ready “off the shelf,” aligned to VA SOLs, approved by VA DOE
- Adaptive to student learning needs, and school / district staffing and curricular gaps
- Cost-effective



The Many Benefits of Online Learning

➤ For students

- Improved choice and effective educational options
- Flexibility in learning approach, schedule, and pacing
- Outstanding satisfaction among parents, students, and partners

➤ For school districts

- Highly adaptive solutions, tailored to serve district needs, including Special Education, Gifted & Talented, and STEM

➤ For both students and school districts

- Access to extensive high-quality course catalog,
- High quality student outcomes and accountability
- Availability of full-time and part-time programs



Quality & Alignment of Online Courses

- Aligned to Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs)
- Full accreditation by AdvancED and various regional accreditation bodies, including SACSCASI
- Demonstrated, measurable student learning gains, quantified through student participation in state testing
- The ultimate proof of concept (10 year track record)
 - Annual AP exam performance
 - Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
 - State report cards
 - Customer satisfaction



Participation of Local Teachers & Staff

- Connections Academy, and the broader online learning community, will bring high-quality jobs to Virginia
- Balanced partnership among school districts, parents, and Connections Academy, with each being accountable for learning gains and student success
- Immediate opportunities to cross-train teachers, staff, and administrators to harness the potential of online and blended learning approaches
- Ongoing professional development, teacher support, and collaboration



Costs of Online Learning

Will vary along a number of dimensions, including (but not limited to):

- Student / teacher ratios
- Frequency and quality of synchronous contact
- Blend of online vs. print materials
- Cost of living / benefit costs
- Provision of technology (i.e. PC, monitor, printer, and internet service subsidy)



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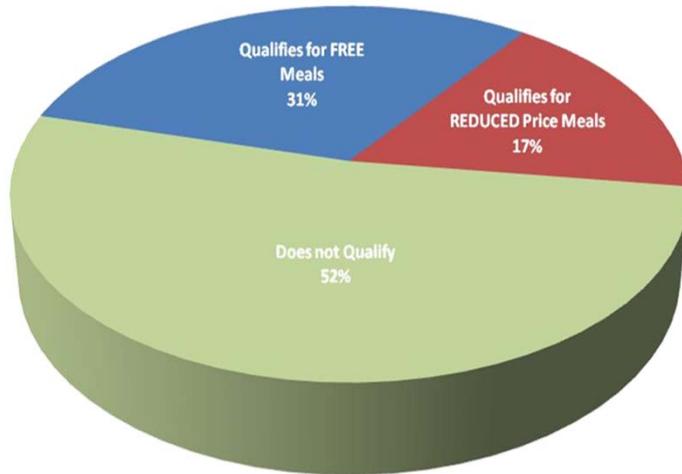
Further Information on Connections Academy



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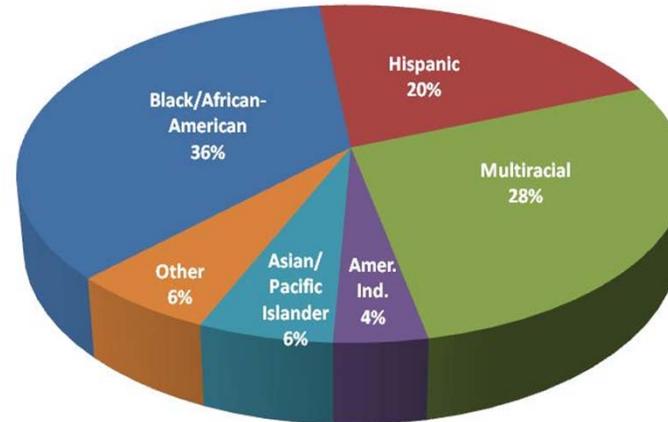
Demographics of Our 30,000+ Students

Socioeconomic Status



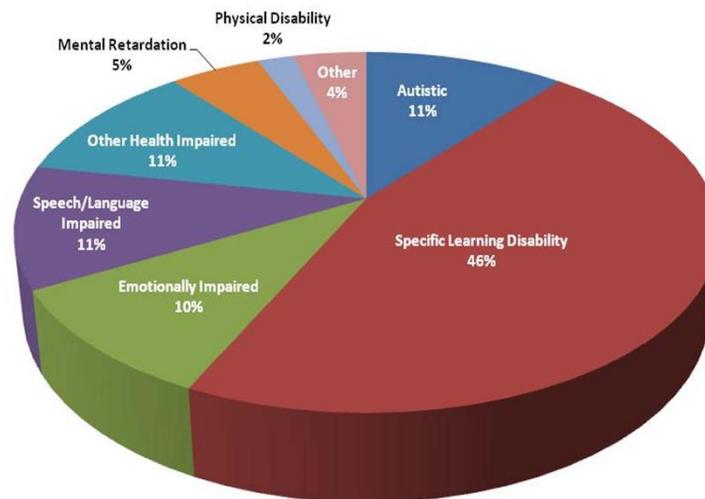
48% qualify for Free / Reduced Price Meals.

Of Minorities



35+% of our students are minority.

Types of Disabilities



12% of our students are special needs.



High Parent Satisfaction



My children are satisfied with the Connections Academy program.*



The curriculum is high quality.*

The
teachers
care
as much about
my child's needs
as I do.



****Based on a survey of Connections Academy families conducted in February 2011 by Leo J. Shapiro.***

